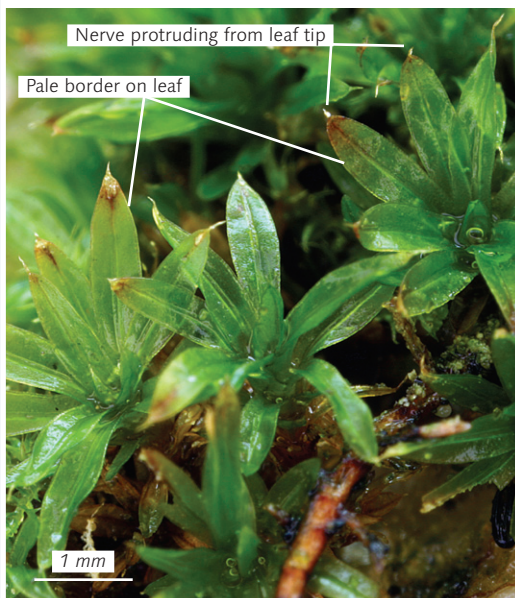
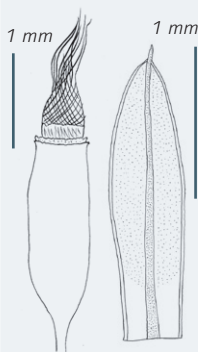
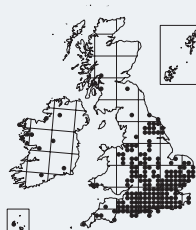


Tortula marginata

Bordered Screw-moss

**Identification**

The tongue-shaped leaves of *T. marginata* are about 1.75–2.5 mm long and have a plane border of elongated cells that looks pale when viewed through a hand lens. The nerve is yellowish and protrudes a little beyond the leaf tip. Shoots form patches 2–3 mm tall. Cylindrical capsules are commonly produced in spring and summer, borne on a pale red seta.

Similar species

Several similar species may not be confidently distinguishable from *T. marginata* in the field. For instance, the recurved margins of *T. muralis* (p. 479) can resemble borders of elongated cells. *T. muralis* is usually bigger (shoots up to 1 cm tall), with leaves 2–3.5 mm long, a long, silvery, excurrent nerve, and is a moss of drier, unshaded places. However, *T. marginata* growing in shade may have leaves approaching the size of *T. muralis*. *T. muralis* var. *aestiva* has a short, green, excurrent nerve like *T. marginata*, but lacks the border of elongated cells found in *T. marginata*. However, some leaves of *T. muralis* var. *aestiva* may have a long, silvery hair point. *T. subulata* (p. 475) has leaves which are bordered towards the base, but is a much larger moss, with leaves 3–6 mm long. Leaves of the rare *T. solmsii* (Smith, p. 351) are less than 1.5 mm long, and have no border of elongated cells. The variable *Trichostomum brachydontium* (p. 433) has leaves 2–4 mm long; they also lack a border of elongated cells.

Habitat

T. marginata grows on moist, often shaded or sheltered rocks and walls (especially of limestone and base-rich sandstone) in woodland, and also on the mortar of buildings.